

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Charlotte Richardson Holsomback

"But about 1950, when they closed, there's only two more families up there [the ranch], and my Uncle John [Richardson]. His family (and mine) was still up there. There were a few families that stayed, but they weren't working for the ranch. The only two was working was [Ernest Keliikuli] and my dad. The rest of them already all started to work for the company--truck driver--into the pineapple. They phased into the pineapple (company)."

The younger daughter of Ernest and Rebecca Richardson of Kō'ele, Charlotte Richardson Holsomback, was born January 17, 1938, in Lāna'i City and raised on the Lāna'i Ranch. At the time she was growing up, the Hawaiian Pineapple Company had covered the island with pineapples, Lāna'i City was fully developed as a town for pineapple workers, and the ranch was declining.

Charlotte attended Lāna'i High and Elementary School, graduating in 1956. She then joined the military and was stationed in South Carolina. There she met her husband, William, and married him in 1960. They have a son and a daughter.

The Holsombacks live in Waipahu, O'ahu.

Tape No. 16-10-1-88
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Charlotte Richardson Holsomback (CH)

July 27, 1988

Lāna'i City, Lāna'i

BY: Mina Morita (MM)

MM: This is an interview with Charlotte Richardson Holsomback on Wednesday, July 27, 1988, at Lāna'i City, Lāna'i.

Okay, let's start with your name.

CH: Charlotte Holsomback or Charlotte Richardson Holsomback.

MM: Do you have a middle name?

CH: Charlotte Pi'ilani Richardson Holsomback.

MM: And your birth date?

CH: Seventeen, January, 1938.

MM: And where were you born?

CH: Lāna'i Hospital, Lāna'i City, Lāna'i.

MM: And your parents' name?

CH: Ernest and Rebecca Richardson.

MM: And your mother's maiden name?

CH: Kaopuiki.

MM: And do you remember your grandparents on your--on both sides?

CH: My mother's side, very well. My father's side, no.

MM: And the names of your grandparents?

CH: My mother's side, Daniel and Hattie Kaopuiki. And my father's side was . . .

MM: Can't remember?

CH: George Richardson and Mary Ellen [Napaepae]. George and Mary Ellen Richardson.

MM: Um, let me see. Can you remember--what's your earliest recollection of the ranch?

CH: Going to the piggery, we're about--well, I was about five. My brother was about four. We used to wake up four o'clock in the morning (so we could go) to the piggery to feed the pigs down there, I don't know how often, maybe once a month or something, my father them rotate as cowboys, and they had to go down to the piggery to feed the pigs. They went through the [Lana'i] City and pick up all the swill, and we would take it down (to the piggery). We were little and we liked to ride the truck. That's the only reason (why) we (woke up so early). We got down there, and (while) they did their duty we ran around and picked up the little piglets. Ran around with the little piglets. When (Daddy them) got through cleaning up, then we'd come home and that's about all I can remember about that place.

MM: Were you going to school at that time?

CH: No, four or five years old, no.

MM: So, at that early age, do you remember what the ranch looked like?

CH: The ranch, at that time, I know it had houses. I guess there was about fifteen, sixteen houses up there. There were a lot of children 'cause we played up there all together. There was a playground up there, there were stables, there were horses and cattle, and there was a slaughterhouse up there. We used to go down on the days that they slaughtered cattle, we would go down there and watch them put (the cattle) in. Don't remember they killing 'em, but I do remember they cleaning 'em in there, and the worst part (was) the smell. (We) used to go down there and watch them.

MM: So they didn't mind the kids running down there to watch them?

CH: Ah, they did. They didn't really like the kids around because then they would get in the way, but every so often, we'd sneak down there and we'd sit on the fence and watch them do it. But if you got caught, you got sent home. But if there were just a few of the kids, they let you go into the slaughterhouse and let you see what they were doing. And then they would chop the neck off, or cut the neck off, and let it bleed, and we'd watch (the blood) go down the drain. And then they'd hang (the carcass) up and with pulleys, they pull it back and forth when they'd skin it. Then there's a truck, I think. The truck used to take it down someplace and put it in a refrigerator. I don't know where. I don't know if it was down into the city, someplace, but the cattle were used just for the (Lana'i) locals--to be fed to the (Lana'i) locals. The rest of them, I don't know what they did with it. I know they used to ship 'em out of Lana'i, too.

MM: Do you remember some of the people you played with?

CH: Yes. There were my cousins. There were my Uncle John's children, John and Hannah Richardson's children. There were the Keliikulis. There were the Kwons. There were my mother's brothers and sisters. They kept a watch over us. They were older than we were. There were the Sakamotos. And later part of the ranch, there was the Moritas.

MM: And then do you--were all the kids around the same age so you had lots of friends . . .

CH: There were a lot of them, and we used to catch the school bus, go back and forth to and from school. The school bus was only (used by) the children of the ranch and the children [living] down at the harbor, Kaumalapau Harbor.

MM: When you started school, let's talk about like a typical day at school. So, were you all attending school at Lāna'i City [Lāna'i High and Elementary School] at the time?

CH: Yes, we were. The bus would come up and pick up the children about 7:30 [a.m.]. Rain or shine, they'd come and pick 'em up. But if it rained, there was no way the bus could climb the hill, so we would have to trod in the mud in the rain and go down to the bus, down on the bottom of the hill. And from there, we would go to school. School started at eight o'clock.

MM: And that's Lāna'i High and Elementary School?

CH: That's right. And then when we got through school, 2:30 [p.m.] the bus picks up everybody to go back. And if you were kept after school or you were monitor, class monitor, you would have to walk home.

MM: How long did it take you to walk home?

CH: Thirty minutes, forty-five minutes. It all depend on the weather and if you stopped to chat with your friends and play along the way before you got home.

MM: So, when you guys started school in the morning--okay, right now, let's talk about Lāna'i School. How big was this school?

CH: I think we had maybe about like 200 to 400 children going from, this was from kindergarten all the way up to twelfth grade at that time. There were that many students, I think. And later, it amounted to about 500 to 600 children. That's from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Today, I don't know what the ratio is.

MM: Do you remember your teachers around that time?

CH: Couple of them. I know there was a Miss Shepherd, I think she was

our third-grade teacher. Our fifth-grade teacher was Mrs. Tom. Our sixth-grade teacher was Mrs. Carlson. First-grade teacher, I believe it was Mrs. Eldredge. They later moved to Punahou School, and I think he started to teach at Punahou, Mr. Eldredge, David Eldredge. And her name, I don't remember her first name, but I know her husband was David Eldredge. And they moved to . . .

MM: How many kids were in a class?

CH: At that time, I think about twenty children to a classroom. I know it was . . .

MM: All the same grade?

CH: All the same grade. At that time, we went to school, you had what they called first grade "A" and "B" classes. If you were a smart child, you were in the "A" class. If you weren't too smart, you were in the "B" class. And that's about it. They had two. First grade had "A" and "B," second grade "A" and "B," third grade "A" and "B," all the way up to the sixth grade.

MM: While you were in elementary school, did you, besides doing the regular schoolwork and everything, did you participate in anything after school?

CH: Not in the elementary years. My father was strict on us. When we got through with school, we had to head straight for home. Maybe in the later years of elementary, maybe about the fifth and sixth grade, we got into intramurals. But at a certain time, we had to be home. So we had my father--the way we did it--we had my father take us, see, when we had intramurals at night because, no, we couldn't go [alone]. And we had him to go with us. That way, he would have to take us, and then he'd be there, and he'd know what we were doing, and he'd see. But after school, if we did have practice, we had to be home at a certain time. So we practiced and had to just hurry and go home.

MM: Okay, so about what time did you get home in the afternoon?

CH: Maybe about 3:30 [p.m.] at the latest.

MM: And then, what was your day like after school?

CH: After school? You got home, you had a snack, and then you did part of your homework, you had chores to do, you got your chores done.

MM: What kind of chores did you have?

CH: Well, it's like, my mother usually had everything done, but we had to help her cook. Cook rice and cook whatever meals she was preparing, help her to prepare that meal. And then when we got that done, then we could go play. Then we'd stay out and play basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball. The whole community at

the ranch would be out there playing, even the people who got home from work. My dad, too, he'd participate in it. My mother, she never did. She was always on the sideline cheering the team on, but she never did participate in any of the games we had.

MM: You mentioned they had a park for the kids.

CH: They had a park for--it was almost like a baseball field, plus they had . . .

MM: Where was it located?

CH: Right in front of the houses, there was a whole big area. I can't describe, but around the playing area, we never did have fences. We had hibiscus hedges as dividers. So there was like a baseball park. It was a very small one, and you played in there. The boundary line for the outfield, you had to go beyond the hedges. So if you hit a home run, you hit over the hedges.

MM: Into somebody's yard?

CH: Nope, there was nobody's yard over there. A big playground. And then we had swings, we had merry-go-round, we had seesaws, we had a slide board, we had volleyball courts, we also had a pool room at one time. When we were very little, they had a pool room up there. And they had all kind games in there. During the summer, they held classes there, summer classes, and all the children from the ranch participated in the summer programs. And they had all kind different games. Ping-Pong games, we learned to play Ping-Pong. We learned to play pool, they had a little pool table. It was called billiards, I guess, more like a billiard than a pool table. The pool table was kept for the men folks after they got through with dinner and everything. They'd go down there and relax and play pool. But if you was in good with the person that was taking care of the pool room on that day, and you knew how to play pool, they let you play it.

MM: And then, you know, at that time, was there still community bathrooms?

CH: Yes. That's where you had to take a bath. You went down there. They had a little toilet house that had six little round circles. Three on one side and three on the other side. Three was for the men and three was for the women. And it wasn't a flush toilet either, it was the regular john, little john house. And they had a divider between the men and the women side of the little toilet house. So the holes on one side, if you stuck a stick from one of the holes on the women's side over to the men's side, and somebody was sitting on the toilet and you hit (their butts) with the stick, they'll jump out of there. We were naughty kids in those times, we'd play things like that. If there were men folks in there we wouldn't do it, but if the little boys that we knew who they were, most of them were our cousins, so we'd wait until they get in there,

and then we'd hit them all with the stick underneath, and they think it was a cockroach or something, and you'd hear them yell and jump out of the toilet. We wouldn't say anything, but as soon as they got out of the toilet and they'd come around the other side, as soon as we hear them opening the door, we'd run out of there and hide behind the hedges and something like that, and they'd know who (did) it, so the next time you got on there, you better check the other side before you got on the toilet because they'll be waiting for you. (MM chuckles.) We used to do those things all the time when we were little. But we never did it to the men folks because we know we'd get the stick, man. Get to the hedges, they would go get the hedges and break the branch and, boy, they chase you all the way. If you didn't get it from them, you got it from your parents, whoever they were. They'll tell on you.

And then they had the community bathhouse with those big Japanese tub.

MM: Furo?

CH: Furo. The did have that, but you had to take a bath first and get in there. We were little kids, we wanted to go swimming in there, but there was a man that took care of that place.

MM: That was up at the ranch?

CH: That was up the ranch. And they wouldn't let you get in there. But so, very often, I don't know, as kids, you always found a way to get into places you not supposed to do. And we had this one kid, he was real naughty . . .

MM: Who was that?

CH: . . . or he was real daring. His name was Alexander [Liloa] Keliikuli, and no matter where or how, he always go into places that you weren't supposed to get in. He'd get in there, he was the skinniest one so he'd slip underneath the door and he'd unlock the door, somehow or other, and we'd all get in there and we'd go swim in there. We got through and we get spanking anyway. We got lickings from our parents, they found out because the old man would say, "You know those naughty kids, they were in there, and na, na, na, na."

MM: Who was the old man that took care the furo?

CH: I don't remember. I know it was an old Korean man. I can't remember his name, but if I'm not mistaken, he had a son, and the son's name, nickname, we used to call him "Cue Ball." But what his father's name was and what his last name was, I don't remember. And he was older than us, the boy was older than us, but they always call him "Cue Ball." Why, I don't know.

MM: (Chuckles) What did the houses look like? What were the yards like

and the houses?

CH: The yards were very neat. Each one had hedges or they had fences around it. It wasn't really picket fence, but I guess you could call it picket fence. Each yard, at that time, had fences around and then they had hibiscus hedges separating one yard from the other, but they also had the fences in it. And each yard was kept real neat. At that time, the boss of the place, he made sure that everybody kept up with their yard.

MM: Who is the---who are you referring to?

CH: Vredenburg. Mr. [Ernest] Vredenburg, at the time I remember, they used to call him "Bolohead" because he was a bolohead man. When we little, we never did know his name was Vredenburg, we only knew he was Bolohead. "There comes Mr. Bolohead". And we never did say it loud, 'cause our parents would say, "Don't you ever say that word loud." Why, we don't know, but that's--and everybody just call him the boss, or we as kids would say--we would overhear our parents say, "Here come the bolohead." So everybody would say, "Oh, here comes the bolohead." And then we got scoldings because we weren't supposed to say that. So, we would say, "Oh, here comes the boss." We never did know his name until we were older. When we were older, then we found out his name was Mr. Vredenburg.

MM: Okay, but was there a yardman or everybody took care of their own yards?

CH: There was a yardman, because they had what they call lane, and the man would take care of the lane. He would walk in there and pick up all the rubbish, but usually, each individual . . .

MM: The lanes, you mean, between each house?

CH: . . . each houses. There was a lane that walked straight down to each house, then you turn in. There were gates to lead into the yard. So you walk down the lane and then you want to go in somebody's house, you open the gate, and just walk into it and that's the way it was.

But there was a man that kept the place clean, or the ranch hands. They had the young boys who worked for the ranch. They would come up and clean in between all the places, too. But usually, it's the people who lived there were cleaning up. Later years, they didn't have it, and everybody took care their own yards. But the yards were all beautiful. You can go from one yard to the other and it was just as clean as can be.

It was like a big whole family live up there. Everybody, like I say, on Saturdays, all the kids had chores to do. You don't go out to play. You clean house, you help your mother clean house, wash clothes. The boys would be out in the yard helping their dads clean yard and everything. You try to get everything done before noon.

Then by noon, or just before noon, it's time for go shopping. One car, everybody got on the car, the kids didn't get to go.

MM: Whose car was it?

CH: It belongs to the ranch. It was a station wagon, so who needed to go to the store would get on there and they go to the store, buy their grocery, and come home.

MM: How did they fit everybody? (Chuckles)

CH: Well, everybody didn't go at the same time, that's one thing about it. So I guess they must have had a schedule, I don't remember, but I know my mom, just before noon, she would go shopping, or if my dad, he'd go shopping before he came home from work and he'd bring groceries.

But as we got older and we went to school, then if we didn't get home from school at certain time, (pau hana time you could catch a ride to the ranch on the station wagon). I guess we were about the first (family) on Lāna'i (to) own a jeep. When my dad had the jeep, that's when we did a lot of our (own) shopping. We didn't have to go on that station wagon.

But when we had to go to the doctor's and stuff, you had to call Mrs. Vredenburg and she'd come and pick you up (on the station wagon) and take you to the doctor. But we as kids, we'd never go to the doctor unless my mom was there. And we never went to the dentist, even (when) we were at school. We had to go from school to the dentist. If we knew my mom was going (to) be waiting for us at the dentist, or we got to the dentist and she wasn't there, we'd head home. We'd walk all the way to the ranch to get her before we go to the dentist. And the reason for that, we just hated the dentist. (We'd never go unless we knew my mom was waiting for us at the dentist.) We got home, we had to turn around, come back, go to the dentist (with Mama). And I wasn't the only one. My brother would do that, my sister would that. So (Mama) would have to walk down, or she'd catch a ride down. And then, she'd be waiting for us at the dentist and then we'd go to the dentist.

MM: Okay, so how did people decorate their yards or landscape their yards? What kind of plants did everybody have besides the hibiscus hedges?

CH: I know they had beautiful lawns. They had flowers. One of the most popular flowers at that time, I remember, was 'ākulikuli. Everybody's yard, just about, had a bed of 'ākulikuli plus gardenia plants. Then they had what they call African daisy. And some of the yards, they had hibiscus, different colored hibiscus. That was the thing then. The more different color of hibiscus plant you have in the yard, the better looking. But there weren't too much (different types of) hibiscus although they did have it in the yard. Down the harbor, they were more famous for their hibiscus and crown

flower, whereas . . .

MM: Down where, now?

CH: The Kaumalapau Harbor.

MM: Oh, harbor.

CH: The people had more hibiscus, crown flower. That was their thing. But they always traded with the people at the ranch. The people at the harbor and the people on the ranch, they always traded things together. And they always--we were the most athletic children from both sides (of the island) because they had a park down there (too). So at school, when we had competition, it was always the harbor children and ranch children on one side competing with the city children. They had no chance 'cause we had bigger parks and we had smaller community and we played with our parents or with our uncles and auntys down there. So we had more exposure to sports, whereas the children in the city, there was too many to compete for the playgrounds and for the gym itself. So they didn't have as much outing as we did. And we did pretty good. And they never did want to compete with us, the kids from the harbor and the ranch combined together.

MM: How many kids, you think, lived at the ranch when you were growing up?

CH: I don't remember. Let's see. My uncle had four, we had three. Sakamotos had [seven], that's ten, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen. . . . Maybe about twenty to thirty children. During the summer we had more children because there was more children that came to visit their auntys and uncles, their grandma and their grandpa.

And then we had enough to have two different baseball teams. I mean, it wasn't really baseball, it was softball. And we had the bases and we had enough children to have volleyball teams on each side. Plus you had substitutes for them, too. And then, when it got too hot, you went into the pool room and you played in there. We had sandboxes, you could build things in the sandbox. But one day, Liloa Alexander [Keliikuli], he got out there and he made this home(-made) bomb about just after the holidays. And he made this pipe home(-made) bomb and he planted it in the sandbox.

MM: Pipe bomb?

CH: A pipe bomb with all this--he had opened all this firecrackers, plus the bullets. He took (the bullets and firecrackers) apart, the powder, and he (poured the powder) in the pipe bomb. He buried the pipe bomb in the sandbox. We had a big-size sandbox. He buried it in the sandbox. Everybody was in the pool room playing and he lit it and we heard this big BOOM, look up, there was the sand all out of the sandbox. He exploded the thing and all the sand went out of

the (box) and it rattled the pool room, building. It rattled it, so everybody went to see what it was, and there he was in back of the tree, and he was just scratching his head. And that bomb--there was a big tree outside, you know that, what you call that, banyan tree outside? Some of the leaves were burning on that thing. He was one of those kids that just was naughty.

MM: What kind of punishment did he get?

CH: I don't know what kind punishment he got, but boy, I'm telling you, the whole neighborhood came out to see what he was doing. And boy, he got yelled at from every which way. How they punished him or what, I don't know, but he always, he always did something. That's why I say, he was the kid that could get into the places that you don't get into, he'd do things that he not supposed to do. He did lot of things, you know.

I think at one time, too, something we--all the people up there, all the family up there, we had kerosene heaters, I remember that time. At one time, he lit that kerosene heater, I don't know what he did, and he got burned. It exploded and burned his face, but he was right back into it. He didn't care, he was one of the kind type of kids that he'll experiment with anything, try anything, (MM chuckles) he was that (way).

Even when we used to go up to the graveyard or up into the mountains, we'd pick guavas. All the rest of the kids came home with guavas in the T-shirt. He came home with apple and oranges. But there was no apple and orange trees up in the mountains. So we would ask him, and he say, "Oh, have some apple and oranges."

And all the kids would enjoy it, and just about time we get halfway through it, we would ask him, "Where did you get those things?"

He said, "You guys really want to know?"

We said, "Yeah."

"Up at the graveyard, the Japanese graveyard, somebody died, they left plenty oranges and apples." And everybody didn't want the apple and oranges, but already you ate half of 'em, so what's the difference then.

But he was one of those kids, and sometimes he'd come home with sushi and something. "Where did you get that?"

"Ah, somebody gave it to me."

Later he says, "Well, some man died and there was a whole bunch of Japanese people up there and they left the food." So he picks it up and he comes home with it. He's was just one of that kind kids that did things.

We'd go up the mountains and got all these little ironwood trees, and he'd climb to the top of the tree where the [branches were] real young so the top would bend over. Then he'd call (to) somebody (on the ground), he said, "Okay, get a rope."

And we'd tie a rope up there and then he'd get up on top the tree and he said, "Cut the rope." And he would go flinging over the other side. He'd land on the guava trees and stuff like that. He'd get all bust up. You think he'd care? He'd come back and he say, "Wow, that was fun." (MM laughs.)

The rest of the kids wouldn't do it, they know we'd go home and we'd get whipping, but he did it. (MM chuckles.) He was just one of them kind kids. He'd just do anything for the first time, and he want the rest of the kids follow him, but none would. He was older than we were, about my sister's age. My sister's classmate, in fact.

MM: Did they let the kids go to work with the cowboys?

CH: At that time, not really. The kids was more school-aged, so they didn't. And I guess 'cause they had child labor board thing later by the time I got up to that age. By then, the ranch went out of business in 1950 [1951]. So by then, there wasn't too much to do out there for the kids. But we did lot of playing up there. Lot of things we did up there, we did on our own. Games we did was on our own. We played out--our fathers would build us stilts. One had a stilt, all of them had a stilt. If one have geta slipper, all the kids in the neighborhood had a geta slipper.

MM: And then--but tell us about the houses. What did the houses look like?

CH: Most of them, almost all of them were the same shape and had about the same room, two bedrooms. There were two-bedroom houses, kitchen, living room. About, oh, when I guess I was about (nine) or (ten) [1947], they started to build bathrooms in the house, or what they call a lean-to, they had a toilet, shower, (wash basin and wash tub and) the washing machine in there and that's about it. I remember that. That's when I was about (ten). Before that, you used to have to use the community bathroom. Then they closed that all up, the community bathroom, they closed that up. And then the people started moving away. Most of the people start moving away after they closed (the ranch) down.

MM: Besides Vredenburg, was there other management type, I mean, what was Vredenburg's house like compared to the workers'?

CH: He had the big house. He (had) the manager's house. He had a great big house. You couldn't go close to his house. He didn't like kids, or his wife didn't like kids around there, but they had big gardens in the back and they had a yardman. But after work, say, maybe about five o'clock, six o'clock, the yardman would go home.

And he had strawberries in his garden, he had carrots in his garden, he had beets in his garden, he had fig trees in his garden, he also had mountain apple trees in there. So, if you didn't get caught by your parents and the old man wasn't there . . .

MM: Who was the yardman?

CH: I can't remember the yardman's name, too. He was an old Korean man. I think he was Cue Ball's dad, that same old man that cleaned the whole community area up in the ranch, but anyway, when he wasn't there, and you didn't get caught by any grown-up, you could go get carrots in there, strawberries, but you didn't tell nobody. A whole bunch of kids--and they had macadamia nut, too--we'd go pick it up. We had to get a coffee can, we dig a hole and put rocks (around the hole) and little twigs (under the can) and light (the twigs) and let the macadamia nut roast in (the coffee can), and when we got through, we'd crack (the nuts) and you would eat it. But we get sick, they know what we did and where we went (laughs). We'd eat the young carrots out of the garden because it was sweet. But if Mrs. Vredenburg heard you, you had it. That old lady would chase you. We'd call her the old witch. It seems to us, at that time, I guess as children, we thought she was an old witch because she used to chase all the kids out of there. She didn't want them in the yard.

MM: But how were the houses different beside being bigger?

CH: She had a big beautiful house, but we couldn't get near it. We never did get near to her house, I guess, she never liked the workers' children in and around that area. They had a great big yard, but when they had children come to visit them, they had their nieces or nephew come to visit them, that's when we could go, not into the house, but around the house 'cause the children would play with us or they would ride horses with us, and that's when we could get around it. They'd go home and get snacks or water or something, "Come on in." But we knew as little children, we weren't supposed to be in that area, so we never did go into that area. We stayed away from it.

And then, there was the principal's house. He had another great big house. It was away from the community area. It's like the boss had his own place, and then the school principal had his own place. But their children, I know when we were (growing up), Mr. [Murray] Heminger had a daughter named Valerie, and we used to go over there and play in their yard. But we weren't supposed to be associated with those children. But as children, children would play and we played. We'd play house with her and everything, she'd get scolding because she'd come and get the ranchers' children to go play with her. And she had a bigger brother, I think, but he never was around.

MM: So, I mean, were they real specific about telling you not to play with these kids, or . . .

CH: Not really, but I guess you knew where your place was, so you stayed away from them. But as kids, kids will be kids, so we played with them. In school we played with them, so why when we go home we can't play with them either?

MM: In the evenings, you know, what kind of kaukau did you guys have? Tell us what you had for dinner. Did you have a vegetable garden?

CH: Um, I don't think we had--we did at one time, but not a great big one. My father was more a cowboy and he never had time for his children. Like he said, he was always out being cowboy, and cowboy life is a hard life. They start early in the morning, they get home real late at night. And I remember when I was real small [during World War II], my father was never around, it seems like. And that's during the blackout time. We had blackouts on the window, and when you--at night, if somebody came to knock on the door, you had to be sure that--(as) children, we always ran to the door, but we got scolding not to open the door until the lights were put out. Then you opened it, or you asked who it was before (letting them) in. So we always hide in the back and just wait behind my mother because my dad weren't around. And she'd ask who it is, and she'd open the door, and it might be one of my auntys or uncles or (whom)ever, so they'd come in and then you turn back the lights on.

But I don't remember my dad being around. The yard, when he was around, he's the one kept the yard up, but they, like I said, they had the community worker that came around and he cleaned up--or the yardman or whatever you call him. And there was hardly any rubbish around the whole community. You never see paper wrappers, bottles or things thrown on the ground. Was always had to be picked up and even as us, we little kids, we throw wrappers down, and somebody would see us, they'd scold us, we'd have to pick it up. So the community as a whole was always clean up in the ranch area. But the city area, I guess they had the same thing at the city area, but we never noticed much about the city area because we were ranch children and all we did down there was go to school and go to the shopping areas and go home. We never did mingle with the city kids, we're more ranch kids.

MM: Okay. Let's go back. So this was during the war, and so you had to blackout your house. Were there any other things that you had to do, any kind of drills or . . .

CH: Don't remember drills, but I remember my father them, well, somebody would come over the house, like I said, anytime of the day, especially at night, and tell my father them there was a plane that went down. So they'd get dressed and I guess as cowboys and stuff, they'd go out to the fields to see if whoever was down was hurt or anything.

But the biggest thing about my dad going out and we liked about it when he came home, if he came home with a parachute, we'd know we're going have silk dress and a silk panty and silk underslip because my

mother them would cut up the parachute and make little dresses and make little underclothes instead of having rice bag kind underpants or something. But at that time, my mother them could buy (clothes), but it was expensive. I don't know what the cost at that time, we were little, I don't know the cost or what you had to do to buy clothes and stuff. I only remember my mother used to sew or my auntys would sew. We had the hand-me-downs from somebody else, one of the cousins or something, and they always handed down whatever good clothes they had to the next one, you see. But I always thought I was the youngest and I had everybody else's hand-me-down. And I didn't have mine until my dad come home with parachute, then we know, "Wow, Sunday we going have pretty white dress. Silk dress for the Sunday school, and we going have silk panty, and we going have a slip made out of silk." And we liked that because my mother would (sew). Simple things as it is, she sew. She wasn't a seamstress. But just as simple as it can be, that's what it was. When she made, we were just proud because we had something silky, that's it.

MM: Did they have something like university extension groups or homemaker clubs for the wives?

CH: They might have, but I don't remember it at that time. But I don't think they had too many people come in. Because you had to come in by boat at that time. If you did come in from Honolulu, I don't remember if they had airplanes at that time. Like I say, we were just ranch children. We just stayed up in our ranch area. They might have had, but I don't remember. I know they had boats. But in later years, as we were growing up older, I remember that we did go to Maui. I remember they did have airplanes. They had Hawaiian Airlines, they had the Concorde, I guess they call it that, or what.

MM: No, not the Concorde.

CH: Not the Concorde. The one--no, not the Concorde, the one that had the big windows. It went out because they said it wasn't doing too good. But they had that before they got the jets in. But other than that, I only remember riding boat back and forth to and from Maui. I didn't like it 'cause I always got seasick, but because everybody else was going, I'm not staying on Lāna'i by myself, I'm going too. I got seasick going (back and forth). We went on a Friday and came back on a Monday. We just went over to spend a weekend over there.

MM: Did you spend a lot of time in Keōmuku?

CH: Yes. Most our childhood from Friday evening we left to go down Keōmuku and we didn't come back up till Sunday. We did that because church was down there, and every Sunday, everybody had to go to church, and my grandfather, he was the preacher down there. First it was Rev. [James] Kauila. He was down there. We called him "Tūtū Man." He (held) church services. After (he died), my grandfather Daniel Kaopuiki, [Sr.] was the reverend. So every weekend, we

headed down there. We liked it as children, during the summer, we spent time down there with my grandparents. We liked it down there because we did a lot of things down there with them (and my cousins).

MM: Well, what kind of things did you do?

CH: We went fishing, we went crabbing. At night, the men folks took torches, they went torch fishing on the little boats. They had little canoes or boats or whatever you call them, and they went. We'd go down go pick up 'ōhiki right on the beach.

MM: 'Ōhiki is crab?

CH: Crab, (sand crab) yeah. So we liked it, we enjoyed it. We didn't mind it.

MM: At that--about how old--from what ages?

CH: I guess we were about seven, eight when we started down there. It could have been younger, but I don't remember being younger going down there, but I know about seven, eight we remember going down, playing down there.

MM: And, at that time, who else was living down at . . .

CH: Keōmuku? I don't think--there was other families, but nothing that I remember or people I remember that (was) related to us. There may have been, but I don't remember. This is . . .

MM: But did your grandparents live there full time?

CH: Yeah, they did 'cause my grandfather [Daniel Kaopuiki, Sr.], he worked for the ranch. And his job was to check all the windmills down there. And then he kept the kiawe trees trimmed away from the road that lead down there. The only road that led down to it. He used to ride a mule and he'd go all the way from one end to the other cutting trees, keeping the kiawe trees off the road that went into Keōmuku. Then he'd check all the water places where the cattle--they used to keep cattle down there.

MM: Was he the only one that worked for the ranch that lived down there?

CH: At that time, I think, at that time I was there, I remember, yeah, he was the only one. We'd go back and forth with him, well, not with him, but we'd be down there, and we'd have to go clean kiawe trees or help him pull it away. And they had cows all over the place, so we never really wandered far from the house. They had . . .

MM: So the cattle wasn't fenced in?

CH: No. Oh, they had fences. The cowboys did have fences, but it was

such a great big area, that the cows could come and go, or the cattle could come and go from wherever they were.

MM: And, let me see. So how did you get to Lahaina?

CH: There was this . . .

MM: Where did you leave from?

CH: From Kaumalapau Harbor. We used to go down there in the mornings and then you get--the boat that came in, I don't know, at that time, I think they used to bring foodstuff back and forth from Maui. Other than that, no, I don't know.

MM: And who used to operate the boat?

CH: Can't remember that, the people's name.

MM: So when you, say, you were going to Maui, you never left from the Keomuku side then?

CH: Not me. At that time, by then, I guess transportation was all through Kaumalapau Harbor at that time.

MM: Okay. Let's see. I'm going to turn the tape over.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MM: Okay, on these trips to Maui, what did you folks do?

CH: Visit. Went to visit on weekends and then play and maybe went to eat ice cream, come back.

(Laughter)

CH: That's about all we did on Maui. We had a lot of cousins, went to visit cousins. We went on a Friday and come back on a Monday.

MM: Did you have to pay for these trips?

CH: No. They were free. That's the reason we went. During the summer, maybe we'd stay one week. We'd go on a Monday and come back on a Friday or we'd go on a Friday come back the following Monday, stay two weekends.

MM: So, what did you have to do? Just show up at the harbor, or did you have to make reservations?

CH: I just followed my Auntie Eva [Evalani Kaopuiki Kwon] and my sister

[Mary Ellen Richardson Nakoa] because they were going and I wanted to go with them. (Chuckles) That's the only reason I went. If not, I would have to stay home.

MM: Let's talk about a later period on Lāna'i. When you were maybe just a little bit older, let's say about from twelve years old on. Did you still go down to Keomuku on a regular basis?

CH: By then, most of the ranch was closed already. So when they was closing, they moved out to the city. Then by the time I was twelve, we still go, but not as often because they were closing down, most of the ranch hands had moved off.

MM: From Keomuku . . .

CH: From . . .

MM: . . . to Lāna'i City?

CH: Yeah. They were starting to move out already. So there wasn't--and Tutu Papa them, because they ship most of the cattle out, there wasn't that much for Tutu Papa them to do down there. So Tutu Papa got ready to move up. I don't know when he moved up into the city. They got a house for him and he sort of retired, semi-retired, and he moved up into the city. But that's about it.

MM: How about, at that time around, when you were twelve years old, was there any changes in the school, Lāna'i School?

CH: Ah, not that big change. The school was still the same. The kids were about the same, but most of the kids, from sixth grade into seventh grade, most of the kids would leave. The ones that (the family) could afford it, their parents either send them to Lahainaluna (in Maui), Punahou (or) Kamehameha School in Honolulu. That's about it. We might lose maybe five or six (children per school year).

MM: Okay, what about, at that time, about the ranch area? Was it . . .

CH: The ranch area was slowly phasing out, too. Because the company had sold--by 1950 [1951], it was completely gone. Everything was sold out in 1950, but '48, '49 . . .

MM: Okay let's talk about the changes around 1950. What kind of changes did you see then when they were phasing the ranch out? What happened?

CH: All the family up in the ranch was gone, so there wasn't that much families up there. And the community was getting small, the families. . . . So . . .

MM: Who was left there around that time?

CH: That time, the only families were left back, I remember was Keliikuli, my dad, and the Moritas had moved in then. The Moritas came--Richard Morita and his family came in (from Moloka'i).

MM: That was 1952.

CH: Oh . . .

MM: So . . .

CH: . . . well, somewhere around there.

MM: . . . just before that.

CH: But about 1950, when they closed, there's only two more families up there, and my Uncle John [Richardson]. His family (and mine) was still up there. There were a few families that stayed, but they weren't working for the ranch. The only two was working was Keliikuli and my dad. The rest of them had already all started to work for the company--truck driver--into the pineapple. They phased into the pineapple (company).

MM: When the ranch was slowly closing down, what happened to the buildings and the parks and things like that?

CH: The park, they took out all the playing equipment that was there. The basketball court, it was torn down. The volleyball court, it wasn't much of them because people didn't have any equipment to play with. The pool hall, they broke that down, they tore that apart because termite-eaten, so they tore that building down. The community bath, I guess about '48, maybe '46, somewhere there, they (tore the inside down). Each house had their own bath(house) by then, so the community bathhouse and the community washhouse (was no longer needed). They turned (the shell part) into my father's garage. And it's still standing today, that part. [The garage was demolished in 1988.] The outside john, that they (tore) down, they covered (the holes) up. So, other than that, the houses itself stayed, but gradually, they started to phase out the houses or tore down the houses because it was termite-eaten and (if) the company kept it, they would have to pay the tax or something on (the emptied houses). So I understand they slowly came in and started to tear the houses down.

MM: What about that manager's house, in that area. When did the manager leave and what happened to his house?

CH: I don't know exactly when he left, but I remember he did leave, maybe in the '50s he left. And then when he left, the house was still there, and we went down and visited. Then, I don't know how long thereafter they tore that house down, too, because it was termite-eaten. Then they turned that area where that house was into a pavilion. (Tourist attraction.) The tourists would come in and they (even) built a bathroom in that area (for the tourists).

MM: That wasn't until the '60s, I think.

CH: Yeah, I think so, but then, it phased out, everything just phased out. But that's about all I remember on that.

MM: When they were phasing the ranch out, what happened, you know, the community was gone, so what did you folks do for activities?

CH: Oh, by then we were more into school activities. By then we're older, so we're more into school activities. We could stay out later and play sports and stuff and come home. By the time we got home, did our chores and did our homework . . .

MM: What kind of sports did you play?

CH: Volleyball, basketball, softball.

MM: On the school's team?

CH: School team.

MM: Did you do any other kinds of activities? Did you belong to any other clubs?

CH: No. Just mostly sports. That's about it.

MM: I thought you were a hula dancer, too?

CH: I was, but I'm not a very good hula dancer. My sister [Mary Ellen Richardson "Suki" Nakoa] was a better hula dancer. She even got a paper to say she could teach hula at that time. I was always "Suki's sister."

(Laughter)

MM: But I thought there was a lot of pageants. It seems like you see a lot of pictures with pageants in it.

CH: There was, but you don't see lot of pictures of me in the pageants. (Laughs)

MM: Did you go to these pageants?

CH: I did, but the thing is, the only reason I got into hula is because my sister was in it and my mother figured I better get in it because I always was a tomboy. I was always playing and not doing what I was supposed to do. So that's why she put me. If my sister took hula, then I didn't have to pay to get in. That's how my mother got me (chuckles) into going to hula. I didn't have any interest in it, but . . .

MM: Who did you take hula from?

CH: Mrs. Ruth Aki. Aunty Honey.

MM: Who is she?

CH: She's--remember Uncle Ah Ing?

MM: Mm hmm.

CH: Okay. That was his sister-in-law. His brother's wife. Uncle Ah Leong Aki. He used to work on the boat. That was his wife.

MM: I see.

CH: And we took hula from her. The first hula teacher I ever had was Mrs. Eldredge, my first-grade teacher. She taught me the first hula. Well that time, we used to have--May Day was a big thing in elementary school, so all the children from each class, we'd perform and do something. And I was in the first grade and we did the hula. And that's how I (got) started, but I wasn't interested in hula.

MM: Around 1951, I believe, there was that big pineapple strike. Do you remember how that affected you?

CH: That's about the time my father and Ernest Keliikuli was the only two up in the ranch. There were cattle, about ten, I think, that was stragglers--or mavericks, I guess you would call them--they couldn't (be caught). So after the company phased out and took everything, those ten cattle that was in the kiawe trees down Keomuku side or wherever, if these two cowboy could find them, whatever meat they could get off it, if they found them and shot 'em and brought it home, skin it, they'd have meat. We were just about the only ones that had meat because my father and Ernest would go down and find the cattle and whatever meat, they came home (with). They shared it with the family. But the strike really didn't affect us that much for the family, the two family that was up there. Maybe the city and the people there, but . . .

MM: Did you see any changes in the city during the strike?

CH: Not---to me, it wasn't that bad because there was picket lines and stuff, but it didn't affect us, you know, we were from the ranch and like I said, didn't--although we had to--by then, the school bus had stopped because there wasn't enough children to be picked up. So . . .

MM: So how did you get to school then?

CH: Jeep. By then we could--we had my sister or my uncles or somebody would drive us down. I think if I remember correctly, my father was (one of) the first to have a jeep on Lāna'i. We had the first jeep.

MM: Not a car, a jeep?

CH: A jeep.

MM: Other people had cars?

CH: Yeah, the other people had car, but we had a jeep. Later on, I think we had a Chevrolet. That's the only car I remember my father owned, but before that, he owned a jeep. And that's the only jeep, I remember. And we about the second or third family on the island that had the first TVs, too. The first one was the Kahaleanu family. And every weekend, because it was the first TV, every weekend, everybody would get ready and on Saturday or Friday night, come home and do all your chores and get your bath done and dinner done, and then you could go down and watch TV. And we'd watch all these spooky movies. And all the kids are on the floor.

MM: This is at your house?

CH: No, not at my house. The first TV was at Kahaleanu.

MM: Kahaleanu's house.

CH: Joe Kahaleanu's house. And all the kids . . .

MM: Where was his house located?

CH: In the city, down the city. I don't know the name of the street, but anyway, down the city and we'd all go . . .

MM: Where he lives now?

CH: Yeah, where he lives now. We'd all go down there with the pillow and the blanket and everybody on the floor and we watch until midnight, spooky movie, then everybody would go home 'cause that was better than going to the movie at that time because it was free and everything. Then, when we had our TV, all the kids would be at our house. All my cousins would be over. Friday night everybody get their chores done and everybody (be at our house) on the floor, time to go home, nobody wants to go home 'cause everybody scared to go home. Dark, no streetlight. But that's about all I remember on that.

MM: Well, I heard that all the cowboys used to watch TV at your house, too?

CH: Well . . .

MM: Old Man [James] Kauila?

CH: They did, but the thing is, they watch--they like boxing and sports thing. We like obake movies at that time we were little. But when time to get to bed, nobody can go sleep because they scared. (MM chuckles.) We go watch obake movies.

MM: Okay, so after the ranch closed down, what happened then? What did your father do?

CH: Then my father, after they caught all those cattle, that stray cattle out there . . .

MM: How long did it take them to round up the cattle?

CH: I don't remember how long it took my dad them to get it, but anyway, they got all ten out sooner or later, and all that meat, they put it in the freezer and shared it with the family. And then after that, he was transferred to Dole [i.e., Hawaiian Pineapple Company] and he worked as a truck driver. And he worked for Dole--I think when he completely retired, he had forty-nine years in the company. That's including his cowboy time up at the ranch.

MM: Okay. So, but when he went to work for Dole, did it make a difference for you folks? Was your lifestyle different? Did you have different privileges or anything like that?

CH: No, I don't think so. My dad wasn't that bad about being real strict on us. In the beginning when we were little, yes, he was . . .

MM: Oh, but did--what I mean is, did you get any more benefits from Dole company?

CH: No.

MM: Did your lifestyle change?

CH: No. Lifestyle was the same. We didn't get that much. By then, well, we were more independent then 'cause you had your own car, you could go back and forth or do whatever, but lifestyle wasn't that much better or bigger or whatever because everything is centered right into the city. All your store, your school area and everything is right in the city, so there wasn't much change. It's just that the ranch became quieter. There wasn't hardly anybody up there. It became like a ghost town. But there still was families up there, there were a few families.

MM: Besides, okay, the Keliikulis . . .

CH: Had moved out. They went to O'ahu. The father worked for the ranch down Kahuku. And we (went) to visit them after they were gone for, I don't know how many years they were gone, and we (went) down one summer to visit them. Then the, oh, Gibsons were already gone. They went to Maui. The older children, they either went away to Honolulu to find jobs or they went to the army like Charlie Kwon. And, well, some more others, I can't remember all the names, but they sort of just phased out of Lana'i. They went to different places to either work or moved out with their family. That's all there was to it. The, what's his name now, the Bentos too, they had two children. They moved out. I think they came to Honolulu. I don't know what happened to them. Then the principal [Murray Heminger], we never heard. Their daughter's name was Valerie, we used to play with her.

They moved out, too. They used to live up in the ranch area because she had a horse and (we'd) play with her in the grass field. But they moved back over here (to O'ahu). The Sakamotos left, too. They moved to Honolulu, too. I think the father [Kuniichi Sakamoto] retired. I'm not sure when they left (Lāna'i) if the father was on retired status or not. And Tutu Kwon [Gi Hong Kwon], they moved to Maui. He moved to Maui, and I understand when he got there, he worked as a yardboy. I think he retired, too, that's why he moved over there. His daughters were over there, so they wanted him to come home and retire from the ranch.

MM: So, let me see. Around that time, what was it like in Lāna'i City?

CH: The city itself, I don't know. They used to have what they call, community living, or camps. In one camp they had Fili--well, at that time, Filipino wasn't as big as say Japanese (families), they have their own camp (areas). Portuguese people had their camp. Filipino, there was Filipino. Koreans, Japanese and few Chinese, but (Japanese families) were the biggest ethnic group, I guess you would call them on Lāna'i at that time. And then each one had their own, what they would say, is camp. Either live Up Camp or Down Camp or camp--they had numbers for each camp too. I don't know their numbers.

MM: Block numbers?

CH: Block numbers or at that time, they called it camp numbers or whatever. And you could tell, as you went through the city, which camp or who lived in which area by the vegetable they grew in their yard. And then I remember the Korean because they were on our way going home from school. If you were late from school and you had to walk home, you passed through the Korean Camp area.

MM: Where was that then?

CH: You know where Aunty Lei [Marian Kanipae] lives now? Right in or around that area, all in that area towards Mr. [Conception] Eligado them house, Mrs. Eligado them. In, around there . . .

MM: End part of Lāna'i City going towards Keōmuku . . .

CH: Going to ranch area. That used to be Korean Camp. You could smell the kimchee as you (walked) home from school. And before you got to the Korean part, further down used to be Portuguese Camp. And the reason you know that, you could smell the doughnuts as you (walked toward) home. The lady, the Portuguese lady, always bake doughnuts and I know because she was Aunty Lei's [Marian Kanipae] neighbor. I don't know the lady's name, but she always give Aunty doughnuts as we were going home from school, and Aunty would see us, she would call us and say, "You guys want some doughnuts and take it home?" So sometime we'd stop and pick up doughnuts and went home. So you knew just about which area you were in as you (passed) by there.

But later years, I guess everybody started moving around and mingled around and so then, everybody got mixed up in all the camp, but before we were small and you go through the camp, you knew. The Japanese Camp, their yard was all really pretty and they had all these Japanese lantern, so you know you was in the Japanese area. And then as you went out of that, you get into the Korean area for you smell the kimchee. And as you was going up by the road, just a little bit further, then you smell the doughnuts, and you know the Portuguese. That's how we knew who was where at that time (on our way home to Kō'e'e).

But the Down Camp, you know where business area is, going towards the Buddhist church [Lāna'i Hongwanji Mission], now going down that way, mostly the Filipino kids lived down in that area. But in later years, I guess, they were all intermingled, wherever, because then people were going and coming. People were leaving, going to Honolulu for better jobs and stuff like that, and the kids, as they grew older, they left the island, so the parents left, too, to find better jobs. The kids were going to school, and they couldn't afford housing, two housing in Lāna'i and Honolulu for their children, so people just moved out. And as they moved out, new people (moved) in. Now, I understand it's mostly Filipinos. As a whole, the community (on Lāna'i) is outnumbered by Filipinos than (by any other ethnic group).

MM: So, what was your high school years like? I know you participated in a lot of sports and everything, what were your classes like, what was the school like?

CH: We enjoyed it, we had fun. I know I played a lot of sports when I was in high school. And in high school, like they're talking about making this 2.0 average in school now to get into sports or is that a "C" average or whatever. During our school years, I remember we had to have "C" averages, too. If not, you couldn't participate.

So like I told you earlier part, the kids from the ranch and the kids from the harbor, they were really athletic 'cause they always participated in sports in and around the area, the community area. So as we went to school, we were picked for the junior varsity or the senior varsity. There weren't many kids from the city that participated or were, I wouldn't say good players, but average players. And we were much better than they were so we always got picked although we weren't the biggest or tallest, but we knew more about the sports than they did. So my high school days was playing sports most of the time. Either basketball, volleyball or softball. But (girls') softball wasn't a real big thing on Lāna'i. They did have it but there wasn't too much competition. In our younger days, they used to have football teams, and my uncles were on the football team. They (played) for the Hawaiian team and (competed) against the Lāna'i (High) School (team). At least Lāna'i School boys had some competition or somebody to play sports (against). (That way they were able to practice and compete against other island teams.)

MM: Did they bring teams from other islands, too?

CH: Yeah, they did. But see, that's why they had the Lāna'i local team, the football team, so that they could play with the (other) school (teams), and the (Lāna'i) School (team) be exposed to more practice (sessions). Their biggest game was always against Moloka'i [High School]. (That was the game of the year.) Then they had teams from Maui come in and play. Once in a while, they would have it from Big Island, and sometimes from Honolulu, but not too many of them. Usually it's Maui county, so it's from Maui and Moloka'i. Lāna'i and Moloka'i was always the biggest (rivalry). Even basketball, volleyball, whatever, it was (always) Moloka'i that Lāna'i always tried to beat (out). And then from Maui, well, since Maui had other schools to compete with . . .

MM: They didn't come over as much.

CH: Yeah, because they had their own. But only Lāna'i and Moloka'i, they had one team apiece, so they had to play within the local community, whatever team they could find. They tried to make--I remember Uncle Biggy [Junior Kaopuiki] them was on this all-Hawaiian (football) team and then they had a Filipino (football) team, but not enough players (on either side) 'cause if the players were going on the Filipino team, then the Hawaiian team wouldn't have enough boys (players, and vice versa. They sometimes borrowed players from each other to fill their teams.) They (also) had baseball teams. The Filipino team was (the best on Lāna'i). The local Filipino (men) was good against the high school (boys). But at least it gave exposure to the high school team before they left to play with other teams from other islands. Baseball was a big thing for the men folks on Lāna'i, the community as a whole.

MM: The adults?

CH: The adults. As a whole, baseball . . .

MM: Playing in it or watching?

CH: Playing it and watching. And every weekend, especially on Sundays, when they had (baseball and) football, they even had cheerleaders, believe it or not, when (we) was little. Watching football, Uncle Biggy, I remember Uncle Biggy played in it. I don't remember if Uncle Johnny [Kaopuiki] and Charlie [Kwon] played in it. They were too young to play, I think. Uncle Sammy [Kaopuiki] had gone to the army so he wasn't in it.

But my high school days, (there was) lot of sports (participation on) Lana'i, because there's not too many outside activities except school activity. (We) had (school) dances, and I never did go to many (of the) dances. (If I did,) I didn't really dance in it. The dances wasn't like proms (of today). At the time we went, we did have senior prom, junior prom, but I didn't attend the junior, senior proms. But they had other (activities)--it wasn't really (dances as we know it today), but it's like a get-together with different classes, like Halloween parties or something. Those

(activities) were big then. We had a party, then (after) had the dances. When the dances came on, I had to go home. My father said I have to be home by eleven o'clock or else. Before that was ten o'clock. So we went home. (Curfew!)

MM: How about summertime? Did you have summer jobs?

CH: When I was twelve, pineapple field were picking up kids up to--well when I was eleven, they picked up kids up to twelve years old to work in the pineapple field. So I said next year, I can work in the pineapple field 'cause all the kids look forward to going to work into pineapple field 'cause that's about all you had on the island besides playing sports or whatever. So I said, well, next year, I'll be able to work in the pineapple field. That year, they picked (kids) up till thirteen and they stopped. And I said, well, I will have to wait the following--following year, they stopped at fourteen. When I got to be fourteen, they had this law, something about you had to go to the labor board and everything, so it stopped at fifteen. When I was fifteen, they said up to sixteen, and that's it. So by the time I worked in the pineapple field, I was sixteen years old. I worked about two years (in the pineapple fields). I graduated from school when I was eighteen and I left (Lāna'i) and (joined) the army (in summer of 1956) and that's it. But my sister, I think she started (working in the pineapple fields) when she was twelve or eleven. Every time I wanted to be the age so I can go and work (in the) pineapple field, they stopped at the age before me.

MM: When you did work in the pineapple field, what kind of jobs did you do?

CH: Picking. Pick pineapple or hō hana, get the weeds out between the (pineapple plants). I liked hō hana (and) picking, but I didn't like it when you went to the old fields and the pineapple leaves were so thick, you couldn't go through (the lines), but other than that, it was fun. (Hard work, picking!) Throwing the tops at each other (to keep checking on each other). You had to do something to keep you going (especially when everybody was tired). It was fun because you had all your (friends)--the school (students), just about everybody working (in) the pineapple field.

If you stayed home, you didn't know what was going on in the community; if you work, everybody knew what was going on in the community. (MM chuckles.) Lāna'i was so small that it always was that way. Everybody knew what was going on in the community unless you just stayed home in your own area and didn't know what's going on. You had to go to the business area, and when you went to the business area, everybody was down there. Seems like everybody visited one another down in the business area, in the store area. You go in the store and you meet everybody there, you stand around and you gossip with everybody and you know what the gossip for the day was. Then on Sundays you went to church and whoever you didn't see at the store, you saw at church and picked up the rest of the gossip at the church, after church was over.

MM: Oh, that reminds me. When everybody was moving out of the ranch, when they were closing down the ranch, you know, you used to have a lot of celebrations together, Christmas, I guess, the holidays. So with everybody gone now, how did you spend the holidays?

CH: It was about the same, but it wasn't as big because most of my mother's family lives there. And as the people from the ranch, the community left, my mother's sisters and brothers were starting their family. So, on Christmas, New Year's and (special) holidays, everybody went to church. And at church, all the little ones would come to church so the older ones could put on Christmas program. We were the older ones.

MM: Now, which church is this?

CH: This is Ka Lanakila O Ka Mālamalama [Ho'omana O Ioredane Hou] Church at that time.

MM: In Lāna'i City?

CH: In Lāna'i City, the Hawaiian church there.

MM: When did you folks stop going to the church in Keōmuku?

CH: I think, I guess when they closed down the ranch in about '50, somewhere down there, or '50, '51, somewhere around there. I don't really remember when.

MM: Okay, at that time when everybody . . .

CH: Yeah.

MM: . . . started going to Lāna'i City . . .

CH: Then they had the church, yeah, up in Lāna'i City. So by then, all my auntys and uncles were raising their children. My mother used to take care all her brothers and sisters. And I remember when we were little, one thing I remembered about my uncles (my mother's younger brothers), my mother did all their laundry. My mother is the oldest of the girls. When she got married and moved onto the ranch, she had to take care her younger sisters and brothers because the school from Keōmuku moved into the city area or the ranch area, or somewhere. So my mother took care of all her younger sisters and brothers. And as we grew up, my mother did all their laundry (plus her growing family's). My mother used to starch all the cowboy blue jeans, I mean, you starch it, then you iron it. And when you ironed it, the pants can stand up by itself and walk, it (seemed) like. My mother did all that, and she had one, two, three, four [brothers] at that time plus my dad and her children. (My mom's brothers and) two sisters (lived in the house) next door. The two sisters kept house for the brothers and they did their cooking and (cleaning), but if they didn't, my mother, whatever she cooked, (she'd) go over and share with them or teach my two auntys (to cook). The laundry, my mother did for the boys, the girls had to do their own. My sister

and I ironed every cotton thing that my uncle them owned that had to be laundered. Their underwear, their handkerchief, their T-shirt, anything. Only thing my mother did was iron all their starched clothes like the pants and the jackets.

MM: How did you wash the clothes?

CH: My mother had a washing machine, either that or they used to have this community washhouse down where my dad, now I told you now he got the garage.

MM: That old garage?

CH: That old garage. (It used to be a washhouse and community bathhouse for the ranch community. It used to house these great big wood stoves--about two or three--to be used to boil dirty clothes. The stoves were heated with kiawe wood or charcoal and big tin tubs were placed on the stove. The tubs were filled with water. Then, the dirtiest clothes, which usually were jeans and jackets, were loaded into the tubs and then the clothes were boiled to release some of the toughest dirt out. The rest of the dirt from the clothes was scrubbed out by hand or scrub brushed on a wooden washboard. My mother them had this big wooden stick, shaped like a big spatula, to help them to stir or turn the clothes over in the big hot tin tubs and sometimes used to beat the dirt out of the clothes. The big, long, wooden stick was used because the heat from the stove was so strong and the water boiling hot that the stick prevented them from getting burned.)

(Interview interrupted, then resumes.)

MM: That's okay.

CH: They had great big tubs (full of dirty clothes), and my (mama) used to scrub (all the clothes) by hand, (with the help of a washboard). They scrubbed (all the dirty clothes) by hand. When they're finished (scrubbing), then they had to go back and rinse it all out (again). I remember my mother used to be (bent) over those big tubs, cement tubs, and with a wooden washboard, she'd wash clothes and we'd play around there, and when they got through, they had clothesline at home. She'd hang all (the laundry) up, and you see all these pants hanging (out) there (with) everything else. Then she had to starch those (pants) and (hang) 'em all (back) up. But all the ladies, I guess each (person had a turn to wash). (There were about) fifteen (families) up there, I don't know (for sure) how many (on a certain day) would go wash. And then the next group would wash, maybe every other day, I don't remember, but I remember Mama used to (say that it was her day to wash. Then in later years when we little bit older, Mama had a wringer-type machine. At that time, the washing machine was put in the lean-to located in the back of the house. The wringer-type washing machine was used to rinse the water out of the clothes after the wash cycle. After going through the wringer the clothes was rinsed in clear water and again

put through the wringer. That's the part we liked best because we could put our shoes through the wringer, which was a no-no, and the machine would get hung up and sometimes broken, and Mama didn't know what happened to the machine).

MM: What kind of shoes?

CH: Tennis shoes. 'Cause we (had) to scrub our tennis shoes and stuff like that, but because we saw the wringer, we thought (the shoes) could go through (the wringer and rinse out all the water from the shoes). (Mama) got all the clothes and she put it through, so why can't our tennis shoes go through that (wringer)? (MM chuckles.) Broke the washing machine, but we didn't tell. And then when we were little, too, I remember my brother used to go shine shoes to make money, used to go over to my uncles, say to my uncles, "I help you guys shine shoes." At that time, you had to shine all your shoes to go to school. White shoes, black shoes, you shine (them).

He used to even go to the [Cavendish] Golf Course and pick up golf balls. They hit it all in the (tall) grass. My brother and some of my cousins, two or three of them, they'd go and (collect golf balls) by the bucket(ful) and resell it to the guys at the golf course. Usually it's some of my uncles, my mother's cousins who'd play golf. Uncle Harry [Kaopuiki] was one of them. They'd go get the balls and sell it back to him. He'd buy (a) bucket (for) a dollar, and the kids thought--that time, that's big money.

My brother made plenty money by going shining shoes for a quarter or something like that. But that was money for (him) and then he could go down and buy candy and whatever. Or he did . . .

MM: How did you earn money?

CH: I had to clean house. And my mother, you know, at that time, they had hard time making money or having money, anyway, because my father them didn't get big pay. So what happened is, whatever little money my mother gave us during school days, she give us juice money, you had two cents for juice and something like that, we would save that two cents. And then at the end of the week, we go the movies. On Sundays, we had matinee. Or we'd go over and help my Auntie Eva [Kwon] and Auntie Harriet [Catiel] them clean house, wash dishes or anything, they'd pay you a quarter or nickel. Then you save it and you have enough money to go to the movie. Mama and Daddy would let you go to the movie, but if you didn't have money, you had to stay home. So, we pinched pennies here and there. (Movies cost ten cents, then went up to twenty-five cents. Now I don't know the price.)

And when my brother went to work for--well, not really work, (collect) golf balls and shine shoes and stuff, we'd (go) to help him shine shoes so he would give us some money. But he did pretty good when he was small. He used to take our dog, we had a dog named Skippy, and Skippy would help him find all the balls in the (tall)

grass. Sonny [Clarence Richardson] would get golf balls by the bucketful, you know. My cousins used to like to follow him, John and Bully [Richardson], because they know he was getting more balls than they did 'cause (of) the dog. But (the golfers) used the balls only for practice, I guess. They bought it from my brother then for maybe a dollar a bucket or whatever.

MM: Did they ever caddy, do you know if they caddied?

CH: A couple times, but I guess they really like the older kids (to) caddy because my brother (Sonny) was small at that time, and they didn't really like the kids on the green. And they had the older kids, like Liloa them, Suki them age. They would go. Sonny was little bit too young at that time. But you know him, he was right into everything. He didn't care who, what or where, he was right there trying to follow up with them. So I guess he (caddied) some--he made pretty good (money) at that time (for his size).

We made money just by going next door and helping my aunty them clean their house or (whatever). We helped my mother with the laundry for Uncle Biggy, Uncle Sammy, Uncle Sol, Uncle Johnny [Kaopuiki brothers], she always got paid. Every Sunday they came and picked up their laundry and dropped off their dirty laundry. Mama got paid and she would give us money because she knew we didn't have enough to go to the movie, and Daddy (would say), "If you don't have any money, you can't go." So Mama gave us money.

MM: So I guess your Sundays were spent, you went to church first?

CH: We went to church, then we came home, had lunch, and then in the afternoon, we went to matinee because it started at two o'clock. But that's why you had to get up on Sundays to go to church. If you didn't, then you had it. Sunday afternoon you couldn't go to the movies. And Saturday, if there was a matinee on Saturday, you had to get all your chores done before noon. If you didn't do it by noon, you couldn't go either. So everybody, the whole ranch area, all the kids, you never see anybody out playing until they got all their chores done. As soon the chores was done, then we'd go over to the other (houses)--we knew (which) house couldn't go to the movie, we'd go over there and say, "Ah, Aunty, can they (children) go to the movie with us?"

"No. Who's going?"

"Oh, Daddy said we can go."

"Oh, your daddy said you could go?"

"Yeah."

"Oh wait, we have to ask Uncle."

So the kids would ask Uncle, and soon Uncle John say yeah, (then the

kids would) come over our house. "Oh, Aunty, can your kids go to the movies because Daddy said they can go?"

We did that every other weekend. They didn't know, you know. We'd go over tell them first and they'd come over and ask, (MM chuckles) and that way we (could go). Or the Keliikuli's would (do) the same thing. They'd come over and you know, ask (our parents), and we'd ask, too. If we asked (our parents), it was always no. If the other kids would come, they say, "Well, if they get through all their chores and they got money . . ."

We'd be outside, "We get money, we finish all our chores." We had to clean house in the morning. My sister and I, we had to rotate week by week. One week she'd do all the kitchen duties, that's wash dishes, cook, cook rice, whatever meal we had to cook, we'd cook, and then clean the kitchen. (After meals) take everything (off) from the stove (and clean), and you gotta polish the stove, and the (refrigerator). The refrigerator needed to be cleaned up. So that was kitchen duty for that whole week, and she had a whole week to do it. The other one had to clean the whole house. Every morning had to vacuum the house or clean the house. On Saturday you . . .

MM: Vacuum. Did you have a vacuum?

CH: Well, not really vacuum, sweep (with a broom). We had (wooden) floor, I mean, we had brooms and mops because we had wooden floors and you had to do that. Every morning when you woke up, you (made) all the beds up and everything. If you had enough time, you sweep and then you go to school. When you came home at night after you had dinner--you pau play and you had dinner, then you clean up. (Kitchen duty) cleans up the kitchen, I'd go in and clean up the house. Sweep out all the dust or whatever and mop the floor and put (everything) up and then go take a bath. And then that's for the end of the day.

On Saturdays, you had to take off all the sheets, you had to make up all the beds after, you had to take everything off the dresser and clean off the dresser. You do all the dusting. If the windows need to be cleaned, you cleaned the windows. You go outside, you get the hose and hose it all down and everything else. So that was a lot of job on Saturday to get done.

My brother had to go outside and clean yard. Help my daddy clean the yard. Hedges need to be trimmed, he trimmed hedges and rake up all the (rubbish)--but he always played his game. We finished our (chores) and because we wanted to go to movie, if he wasn't done, we had to go outside and help him. And he played his game. He waited till we almost through with our (chores) and then he'd (start doing his chores).

And whoever had the housecleaning had to do the washing, too. The washing and picking up (of) all the laundry for Saturday 'cause Mama

usually (did all her brothers' laundry) on Monday. Saturday, that's our laundry (day) for our house had to be done. All the sheets come out and all the (dirty) clothes, school clothes and everything (else was washed on Saturday). She did most (all) of the washing, but when you finish inside cleaning up, you had to go outside and help her with the washing and stuff. When (the clothes were dried), you pick up the dry clothes, you (take) it in(side), you fold it up, and (put them away). Then you make up all the beds that the sheets (were laundered). You gotta (make) up all the beds again. So, every other week, you know, my sister and I would trade places. But her, she left all the (dirty work) for me to do when it came to the cleaning of the refrigerator and the stove. She only did it where you can see (the dust) on the top and underneath where it had to be cleaned out, I always ended up (doing the big cleaning) when (it was my turn for kitchen duty).

MM: So after high school, what made you decide to go into the army?

CH: My cousin. She wanted to go into the army and I (wanted to go) to the university, that's what I said I (wanted) to do. But I didn't pass my test for university. She did. I passed the one for the army, and she didn't. She wanted to (join) the army and I wanted to go to school, but because it was the other way around, we decided, well, let's go to the army and get schooling all at once. We went--one year after we were in the army, she got out. And she's the one who wanted to go . . .

MM: Which cousin is that?

CH: Patsy Kaopuiki. She wanted to go into the army because she said we get free schooling and all this and that, we couldn't afford our own schooling anyway on our own, so we went in August (1956). She and I left in August, we went with two other girls (from O'ahu) into the army. One year after the army, she got married and got out. And I stayed in.

MM: Okay. I think we'll end it here.

CH: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

LĀNA'I RANCH
The People of Kō'ele
and Keōmuku

VOLUME I

**Center for Oral History
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